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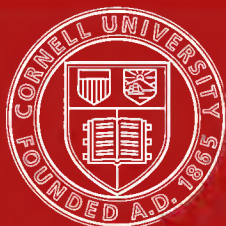
MUSICAL ART

BY

CHARLES HUBERT FARNSWORTH

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF MUSIC, TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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MUSICAL ART

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

This syllabus is an outline of a course of study having for its aim the increase of our musical enjoyment. The work is given partly in class, coming once a week, and partly through supplementary readings.

In the class work, the student by defining and describing in non-technical language what he himself hears develops his capacity for discrimination and imaginative listening.

In the supplementary reading two ends are sought. First, to prepare a healthy, aesthetic approach to art in general and music in particular, inducing that serious attention to the beautiful without which it cannot be enjoyed.

Second, by means of historical readings, to give a knowledge of and sympathy with composers and their works that will also lead to greater enjoyment of what is heard. The class work is given under three heads.

Part One notes the separate factors that go to make up a beautiful whole. We commence by listening to simple songs and instrumental pieces of undoubted beauty rendered as effectively as circumstances will permit. In connection with the pleasure awakened, attention is drawn in turn to the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic aspects, but only so far as the majority of the class can recognize the connection between the aspect observed and the pleasure aroused.

In **Part Two** especial attention is paid to the arts that manifest their beauty through surface designs such as are seen in decorative work, book-covers, wall-papers and rugs. In these arts we can more easily see the means used in combining parts into a whole, because it is easier to see relationships expressed in space than to remember relationships expressed in time as are those of music and poetry.

The aim is to observe how, for instance, in a song, the poem, melody, rhythm and harmony are united through repetitions and adaptations to each other to produce the complete enjoyment of the whole. It is the complement of **Part One**.

In **Part Three** application of the two complementary sets of observations carried on in parts one and two is made to musical works. We start with the symmetrical dance forms, both early and modern, and pass on to the idealized treatment of these same forms, taking such widely different expressions as are found in the works of Bach and Chopin. The aim in this applied work is not that we may be able to make technical distinctions, but descriptive ones, that can be put into words, such definitions inducing the necessary attention and concentration.

MUSICAL ART

Part One

Observation of the pleasure contributed by the *separate constituents* of a musical impression, such as phrases, rhythms, harmonies, as seen in

A. COMPLETE PIECES, SONGS AND INSTRUMENTAL WORKS GIVEN WITH SUFFICIENT REPETITION FOR COMPREHENSION AND ENJOYMENT AND SUFFICIENT VARIETY TO FORM A BASIS FOR ADEQUATE COMPARISON.

1. Hearing a song and defining as far as possible with words what it is that pleases us.
2. Noticing how far the pleasure of the impression is due to
 - a. The thought and lyric beauty of the poem
 - b. The appropriateness of the music to the poem
 - c. The qualities of the music itself
3. Observing complete pieces by themselves, both instrumental and vocal, and noticing what in their general movement makes some more pleasing than others.

B. MELODIC MOVEMENT, NOTICING HOW THE WHOLE IS MADE UP OF PARTS AND HOW THE CHARACTER OF THE PARTS AFFECTS THE PLEASURABLE IMPRESSION OF THE WHOLE WITH REFERENCE TO:

1. *Most obvious divisions of the melody* brought about by a more or less complete cessation of movement: noticing the nature of the movement in these divisions, their similarity and contrast and the pleasurable effects thus produced.
2. *Less obvious divisions of the melody*, such as phrases and sections, as they appear in those portions already observed: noticing the relation between their movement and the effect of the portion of which they form a part.
3. *Least obvious divisions of the melody*, motives, as they appear in those smaller portions already observed: Noticing the characteristics of these partial movements and the effect they have on all that is constructed out of them.

C. RHYTHMIC DESIGN. REVIEW OF THE ABOVE MATERIAL FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCOVERING THE PLEASURE THAT ARISES FROM THE RHYTHM ALONE BY DISASSOCIATING THIS FACTOR FROM THE REST OF THE WORK WITH REFERENCE TO:

1. *Rhythmic units of movement*; the relation these have to each other and the effect of their characteristics on the work as a whole.

2. *Time units* that are established by the melodic movement and which by their regular successions and groupings give definiteness to the whole tonal design, thus awakening pleasure.
 3. *Variation of the melodic movement* through alterations in rhythm and time units, and the relation these changes have to the pleasurable effect of the whole.
- D. HARMONIC SETTING STUDIED IN THE COMBINATION AND ACCOMPANIMENT OF DIFFERENT MELODIES AND DIFFERENT ACCOMPANIMENTS OF THE SAME MELODY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBSERVING AND DIFFERENTIATING THE PLEASURABLE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY SIMULTANEOUS SOUNDS. SUCH EFFECTS MAY ARISE FROM :
1. *Combintaion of melodies*, where the pleasure is largely in the excitement of following the movement of the various melodies in the resulting harmony, rather than in the harmony itself.
 2. *Accompaniment of a single melody*, where the pleasure lies in the united effect of melody and harmony, the latter heightening and coloring the effect of the former, supplying a background that enhances the beauty of the melodic outline.
 3. *Harmonious interest*, primarily, where the pleasure in the melodic is subordinate to the effects produced through the succession of the chords, observation being directed both to their structure and the conditions under which they succeed each other.

Part Two

Observation of the pleasure contributed by the *union of the separate rhythms, motives and harmonies*, including those that appeal both to eye and ear, as seen in

- A. ILLUSTRATIONS OF ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE, PAINTING, POETRY AND MUSIC, NOTICING THAT :
1. The forms used for expressing the beautiful in all the arts except music have an existence independent of any pleasure giving significance. They have a purpose and are organic without reference to appearance.
 2. When the artist deals with these forms he so modifies their appearance that a new pleasure is awakened. This pleasure, which we speak of as beauty, is the result of the rhythms and an organic relating of the impressions brought about through choice, omission and repetition.
 3. Music does not employ either material or form already having a practical existence, but creates its material and form for the sole purpose of pleasure, thus giving a unique interest to its processes.

B. ILLUSTRATIONS OF DESIGNS ON FLAT SURFACES, SUCH AS WALLPAPERS, RUGS, CLOTHS, LACES AND BOOK-COVERS NOTICING:

1. When the design is not an imitation of an organic object, the means employed to bring about:
 - a. Variety and unity
 - b. Beginning, middle and end
 - c. Principality and setting
2. The parallelism between the above arts and music in the way a complete work is developed from a few root ideas or motives.
3. The importance that space plays in the arts that appeal to the eye and how music depends on the memory for this relating element, manifesting it in various forms of repetition.

C. ILLUSTRATIONS OF MUSIC BELONGING TO THE ROMANTIC TYPE, WHERE THROUGH A SUGGESTIVE TITLE, OR ACCOMPANYING TEXT OR DESCRIPTION, A UNIFYING AIM IS GIVEN TO THE VARIOUS IMPRESSIONS AWAKENED, NOTICING:

1. How the presence of such external aids to comprehension makes possible a freedom in the structural relations of the material employed.
2. That these freer structural relations make a more direct appeal to the imagination, demanding a much greater activity in this respect on the part of the listener, the attendant pleasure depending largely on his interpretive capacity.
3. How the enjoyment of such art makes a less technical demand, but a much greater character and cultural demand upon the listener.

Part Three

Practice in the enjoyment of musical works through the exercise of the increased sensitiveness to musical effects developed by means of the observations indicated in **Part One** and **Part Two**.

- A. ILLUSTRATIONS OF MUSIC, INCLUDING NOT ONLY WHAT WAS HEARD IN **Part One**, BUT UNFAMILIAR MUSIC OF THE SAME TYPE.
- B. ILLUSTRATIONS OF MUSIC WHERE THE INTEREST LIES CHIEFLY IN THE GRACE AND RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER OF THE RHYTHMS, PHRASES, AND HARMONIES AS EMPLOYED IN DANCE MUSIC, BOTH OLD AND NEW, AS WELL AS IN SOME IDEALIZED TREATMENTS OF THE SAME.
- C. ILLUSTRATIONS OF MUSIC WHERE THE INTEREST LIES CHIEFLY IN THE IMAGINATIVE SUGGESTIVENESS OF THE EFFECTS PRODUCED, REQUIRING AN EXTERNAL AID, SUCH AS AN EXPLANATORY TITLE, OR ACCOMPANYING TEXT, TO DIRECT THE MIND INTO THE REQUIRED CHANNEL. NOCTURNES, REVERIES AND ROMANTIC MUSIC, GENERALLY, ARE EXAMPLES.

The three groups given above are for the purpose of gaining facility in

1. Feeling distinctly the difference with reference to likeness and unlikeness of effects which before was not felt pleasurably at all, or only dimly.
2. Feeling the organic relation of the parts to the whole thus gaining pleasure from the accumulative effects.
3. Comparison and valuation with reference to personal preference of what is heard—the exercise of the aesthetic judgment.

Readings on Aesthetics

These readings consider the aesthetic side of music.

Two opposite views must be guarded against, one in which the appreciation of the beautiful is looked on as something taking place entirely through the emotions, spoken of in opposition to intellectual as being "emotional." Two selves are pre-supposed, an intellectual self dealing with science and practical affairs of life and an emotional self that deals with pleasures. Art in general, and music in particular, is thus looked on as a pleasant excitement akin to such as might be produced from drugs. It is thought of as an indulgence and as an excellent antidote to the over intellectual activities. The music in schools is looked on as partly recreative, as a relief from the attention and concentration required by the ordinary studies.

The opposite view emphasizes the intellectual side, despising the emotional, making art consist of the observation of form, treating beauty as merely a question of relations and proportions.

The position taken in this course is that the whole self acts both in science and art. While admitting that different kinds of activities bring a greater strain on different parts of the self, as physical work on the body, mental on the head, yet the self back of it all is the same. Emotional and intellectual activities go on whether the work be physical, intellectual or artistic. The extreme consciousness of pleasure connected with the beautiful is simply an indication that the entire self, the senses and the intellect as well as the emotions has been most healthfully active. We hold that the capacity for such a complete action of self is a unique endowment varying with each individual much as the memory capacity varies. But as in the case of the memory few people ever exercise the full extent of the power they possess.

The readings suggested below aim to bring about that attitude towards art and music that will inhibit both the emotional and the critical approach so destructive to the healthful enjoyment of the beautiful.

Where in many cases certain chapters only are suggested, they represent the minimum amount of reading expected. It is hoped that the

student will read further as time allows. It will be seen that occasionally these extracts are critical of each other.

Hugo Münsterberg, *The Principles of Art Education*, Part I; Henry Rutgers Marshall, *Aesthetic Principles*, chaps. i-iv; R. Wallaschek, *Primitive Music*, chap. ix; Edmund Gurney, *Power of Sound*, chap. xxiii, "Origin of Music"; Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*. (A classic statement of music as being objective, consisting of beautiful forms. Especially valuable in its criticism of the sentimental approaches to music.) W. A. Ambrose, *The Boundaries of Music and Poetry*. (A good antidote to Dr. Hanslick.) Edmund Gurney, *Power of Sound*. (Discussions of the Nature of Music.) "Music as ideal motion," chaps. i, iii, viii, x, xi, xiv; Ethel D. Puffer, *Psychology of Beauty*, chap. v, "Beauty of Music." (Excellent summary of a modern position.)

Historical Readings

The historical readings, like those on aesthetics, are purely secondary to the aim of the course which is musical enjoyment. By means of these readings that setting for musical works is obtained which is essential to intelligent enjoyment. It is unfortunate that musical illustrations for the historical readings cannot be fully given in class. Their performance would interfere with the purpose of this particular course; but the exceptional opportunities that New York offers on the line of historical programs will make it possible for students to hear examples sufficient to give point to these readings.

Professor Dickinson, *History of Music*. (A clear and concise statement of the development of music. Each chapter has a bibliography by the aid of which the student can read more fully on a given topic.) Professor Waldo Pratt, *History of Music*. (In this work more detail is presented. The student unable to work in libraries, as suggested by Dickinson, will find this work rich in material, skilfully selected and arranged, enabling the reader to form sound judgments of the periods treated.) Surette and Mason, *The Appreciation of Music*, chaps. i-vii. (An excellent statement of the facts of musical observation, with brief historical notes. The reading of these chapters, after finishing **Part Two** will make a valuable review, especially as the observations are here presented in their structural relationships.)

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